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Crime-scene Scenario Final

Arriving at the crime-scene

- The first thing to be done is block off the crime-scene in order to avoid crime-scene contamination.
 - Keeping people out of the scene minimizes evidence contamination, though many may be curious to see what occurred.
 - The theory of transfer states that we bring something with us to the crime-scene and take something away, thus skewing the crime-scene from the original state by contamination.
 - This is because the original state of the crime-scene was left by the criminal suspect; a lack of contamination allows the scene to be a snapshot in time.
- The curious must be noted and immediately evicted from the scene.
- People to be kept out of the scene include unauthorized civilians, and any more than the absolute minimum number of law enforcement agents and forensic crime processors.
- Waiting for backup to arrive, I should stand guard at the scene preventing these unauthorized people and even holding back eager officers from entering the scene.
- I must call my immediate supervisor and inform them of the deceased white female who is approximately 35 years of age.
- I must obtain an initial search warrant to search the scene; failing to do so will mean that evidence is inadmissible.
 - This is another reason why holding personnel from entering is key.
- The coroner must be called in order to pronounce the woman dead, and EMS should be called if they were not already called by the patrol officer 15 minutes earlier, as they would have provided emergency care if the woman showed signs of life.
 - This would have been important for many reasons: her livelihood is one reason, but from the stance of a patrol officer or criminal investigator, she may have given a dying declaration of her attacker when informed of her impending death.
- Forensic services are next on the list to call, as they are best equipped to handle the evidence, process it, and ensure that there is not any contamination.
 - Their van also contains the best equipment for forensic investigation.
- A cursory search of the immediate area should be done, and any observations should be recorded in my field notes as to ensure the integrity of the preliminary (case) report.
- Officers who are not needed at the residence should ensure that the general area is searched for anything that stands out as well: this includes the area of the trailer park which contains 62 trailers.

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- If there is anyone in the trailer, they should be moved out and questioned: does she have kids?
- I should gather the following information in my notes as the investigation commences, which will later be included in my preliminary (case) report when the details of the case culminate:
 - The offense, the time of day, date and approximate time of offense if known, identification of the victim, the location of the offense, the method of operation if known, and the identification of the officer.
 - Since the offender was not there, I would be unable to record this information initially, and the specifics of the crime won't be known until confirmed by the crime lab.
 - Getting the approximate time is important and can be indicated by rigor mortis (which sets in at about 12 hours) or putrefaction (about 10-20 days).
- All this information will aid me as I attempt to reconstruct the scene of the crime based on the evidence location in relation to its former known position.

Equipment I will have on hand for the investigation

- To be prepared for crime scene investigation, I must ensure I have a crime toolkit containing the following:
 - A 35 mm camera or digital camera capable of videotaping with an adequate supply of film and power.
 - A portable lighting system to ensure quality photographs, and that I do not miss or step over any evidence.
 - Assorted steel tape measures that can reach at least 25 feet.
 - A ruler or other measurement marking devices.
 - Latent fingerprinting equipment.
 - Gloves to protect the scene from contamination, this will enable that I avoid leaving my latent fingerprints.
 - Forceps and small tweezers and a pair of scissors.
 - A small saw to take evidence: for example, drywall.
 - Filter paper or small swabs for liquid evidence or trace evidence.
 - Various evidence containers for liquid and solid evidence.
 - Paper envelopes for physical evidence.
 - Evidence tape to seal off the evidence containers.
 - Casting material to take molds of possible footprints around the perimeter with a rubber container for the mixture.
 - A magnifying device should be kept.
 - Crime-scene tape for the scene.
 - Protective clothing: boot covers, eyewear, fiber free overalls, face masks, hair nets, gowns, and anything that will prevent me from contaminating the scene with things I bring in with me.

- A blue light with yellow glasses which makes small trace evidence more visible can be used to ensure that a photo is taken of all evidence.
 - There could be a very small amount of blood somewhere which wouldn't have been sampled, documented, or photographed otherwise.

Entering the home for crime-scene documentation and initial photography/videography

- I may enter upon judicial approval of the search warrant and should do so with the minimum number of personnel.
 - Having too many personnel evident in the photography may put the integrity of the evidence into question and taint the scene.
 - A contamination list should be made, documenting every person who enters and exits the crime-scene and why: this includes first responding officers, firefighters/EMTs, family members, criminal investigators, and all crime-scene personnel.
 - Still, there should not be that many people in the crime-scene, otherwise contamination will be increased as the theory of exchange inevitably manifests.
- I must ensure that myself and my fellow crime-scene personnel are wearing gloves and other protective equipment as to avoid contaminating the scene with latent fingerprints.
 - A fiber free boot cover would also be ideal to avoid leaving physical footprints or residue from the boot.
 - Anything that is fiber-free and covers the mouth, hair, and overall body would be helpful in avoiding crime-scene contamination since hair, saliva, skin cells, and other bodily fluid or cells may be added to the scene, thus contaminating it.
 - Fibers can be left via the theory of exchange and would contaminate the crime scene from its initial state as the offender left it.
 - Even if we can't assume that there was an offender despite seeming obvious, preventing contamination is an important way to ensure the integrity of the investigation and evidence.
 - We should always treat the crime-scene as if there is indeed a criminal homicide as to not miss out on important details; that is how this crime-scene is being handled.
- The first thing for me to do is to take a coordinated series of crime-scene photographs with a digital photography device or a 35-mm camera from a natural point of view.
- These photos must be taken prior to the movement of any object in the crime-scene to ensure that the photo captures the scene as the offender left it.
 - The photographs should be taken from a general view of the exterior of the home, as well as general views of the interior, recording the time and details of the photograph in my notes.
 - Setting up portable lighting ensures that the elements of the crime are adequately illuminated for photographic documentation.

- The photos should be in color as to provide the best, most accurate image, thus avoiding photographic distortion.
 - The following details regarding photography should be recorded in the field notes (and on the back of the photos if possible). Recording these details will ensure that the defense attorney does not attempt to devalue the quality of your evidence, which may make it inadmissible:
 - Data to identify the subject of the photograph, but without too much unnecessary information
 - The location of the photograph, including the state, city, and street address.
 - The identifying data of the photographer, including the name, police agency, badge number, and identification number.
 - The case number if established at the time of dispatch.
 - The precise time of the photograph.
 - The date the photograph was taken.
 - The weather at the time.
 - The photographic equipment used, including shutter speeds, film type, and developing and printing techniques.
- Next, photos of specific rooms should be taken, with special attention to the living room in which the deceased woman was found.
- As the coordination of photos is focused inward, specific components of the crime like physical evidence should be accounted for and detailed; these should also be logged in my field notes.
- This physical evidence should be photographed next to a measurement marker, which can be a ruler or any other easily comparable object of well-known size.
- The body and physical evidence to take a picture (prior to collection from the forensic services and criminal investigator) of includes:
 - The deceased woman in the living room, who should be photographed under adequate lighting from a long view; specific shots should be focused on the evidence of harm on her body and clothing.
 - The bruises on her face, the marks on her neck, the bloody shirt, and any other signs of postmortem lividity should be photographed and taped without moving the victim; a measurement marker should be placed next to her.
 - This will show if an offender moved the woman as to manipulate the crime scene.
 - Does she have defense wounds, are there hesitation marks on her related to the knife, or are there multiple stab wounds?
 - These must be photographed and taped.

- Is the mark on her neck related to the hanger near her? The photographs make it sure that these items were indeed present at the crime-scene.
- Most of these questions are speculated until absolutely confirmed by the forensic medical examiner, who can use scientific equations to determine the approximate time of death.
 - This is a maxim that stands even when the scene seems to point to the obvious.
- The time of death is never entirely accurate, but the photographs can aid in this process, as they capture phenomenon such as rigor mortis or putrefaction when the woman was found.
 - The knife should be photographed under adequate light, and a marker should be placed next to the knife to give the best photographic representation of the evidence.
 - The misshapen coat hanger should be photographed under adequate light, and a measurement marker should be placed next to the evidence.
 - The upended furniture and children's furniture should be photographed firstly from a long view, and then focused specifically on each piece of furniture under adequate lighting with a measurement marker.
 - All of this should be well-documented in the field notes and on the photograph.
 - Is there any sign of forced entry to the home? This would be evident by broken glass from windows and pry marks on the doors or windows surrounding the house.
 - This should be photographed, videotaped and documented.
 - If there is not forced entry it may be suggested that the woman knew her killer.
- A video camera will be used as well to go over all the evidence which was photographed; documentation of the video evidence should also be filled out and recorded in the field notes.

The crime-scene sketch

- The crime-scene sketch occurs after the scene was initially searched, photographed, and videotaped; the sketch is of great value in criminal court.
 - This sketch should first be done in pencil to ensure that the sketch accurately portrays evidence and measurements pertaining to the crime-scene.
 - The final version will be done in nonperishable ink via pen.

- The physical evidence of the crime which includes but is not limited to the knife, misshapen coat hanger, furniture, as well as any other biological evidence like bodily material or fluids, should be drawn out in accurately measured proportions from each other and permanent objects in the crime-scene sketch.
 - The final search, and confirmation by the forensic processing unit and investigator, will determine whether this was all the physical evidence at the scene; new evidence can be added to the crime-scene sketch when new measurements are taken.
 - The distance from permanent fixtures should be accurately recorded and depicted.
- The crime-scene sketch should be measured by the criminal investigator and accurately display the proportions of the physical evidence; any inaccurate portrayal of the location of evidence can influence the juror perception of the guilt or innocence of the suspect.
- While you do not need to be an artist, the responsibility of sketching should be taken with accuracy and a goal for a clear portrayal in mind.
- Though I can assign another officer to sketch it, I have decided to take this task on.
 - A 25-foot steel measuring tape should be used to record these exact and accurately recorded measurements of the physical evidence and permanent objects in the house.
- Too much detail shouldn't be included in the sketch as to avoid confusion; movable items unrelated to the crime-scene convey details irrelevant to the crime and will be avoided.
 - Extraneous detail, including movable furniture, may cause issues if jurors recognize that items in the house were moved after the fact: this would be equivalent to crime-scene contamination and may render evidence inadmissible.
- The living room should be sketched out with the deceased woman being drawn in proportion to the knife, coat hanger, upended furniture and children's furniture, walls, and permanent objects in the house; other rooms that are relevant should be included in the sketch.
 - I have decided to use the rectangular coordination method, with two right angles being outlined in proportion to the physical evidence and permanent fixtures centering around the living room.
 - A projection can be used to document biological/trace evidence like blood stains or other physical evidence that imprinted on the walls; bullet holes would be something that should be ruled out, and if bullet holes are present, they should be documented on the 3D exploded sketch before the dry wall is removed via saw.
 - Though it appears obvious that the knife was used in this crime, we do not know this for sure and should make sure to document everything and look for less apparent evidence.

- Even if there was an item introduced to the scene by an offender to throw off investigators, it is not the job of the criminal investigator processing the crime scene to jump to conclusions.
 - The crime lab will be able to decipher with scientific certainty what is and is not an original element of the crime.
 - Staging is common: for example, the offender may have taken items from the house to make it look like a burglary turned robbery, which went wrong.
- The official crime (preliminary) report should include the accurate sketch with the following details included:
 - The name of the investigator and identifying badge number.
 - A detailed location of the scene, such as the city, state, and street address; the living room should be noted as the center of the sketch.
 - The date and exact time the sketch was first drawn in pencil.
 - The evidence listing/key which shows evidence as it corresponds to a letter or mark indicated in said key.
 - The case number of the investigation.
 - A compass arrow to give direction.
 - The scale of the sketch should be included, or the words “not drawn to scale.”
- I am choosing to draw it to scale, where one-fourth inch equals one foot.
- The computer-aided design program (CAD), which uses laser lights and takes up to 25,000 measurements per second in 3D, may be utilized if available, for the scale of the scene is most accurate.
- I would request the CAD if available, for it gives the best portrayal of this serious crime, allowing for an accurate point of view and zooming of particular elements of the crime-scene.

The more comprehensive crime-scene search using the strip search method

- In order to collect evidence from the interior of the residence, I will assign roles to officers on the scene, briefing them to watch where they are stepping and not act impulsively or without great care; hasty actions will lead to valuable evidence being trampled and lost.
- The strip search method is what I have decided on, as it allows for the interior of the crime-scene to be searched from one end to the other with more than one officer or forensic processing unit.
 - The exterior of the property should be searched from one end to the other as well, switching to a grid search if necessary.
- Walking from one end of the scene to the opposite end of the scene, I will then turn around and cover ground to the right or left without stepping on the same spot twice.
- The rooms of the trailer should be searched in this method, with special attention to the living room where the victim lies: assigning a CSI or officer, and myself to this section (living room) would allow that the scene is thoroughly checked.

- As I move from one end to the other, I will make sure that I shine my flashlight ahead of myself to ensure that I do not damage or carry away smaller pieces of physical evidence.
 - Smaller items of physical evidence include woodchips, hairs, paint flakes, glass fragments, or small fibers; if not careful, these may be lost before even accounting for or observing them.
- If new pieces of physical evidence are uncovered, I will take note of it for documentation and photography/videography.
- Things such as footprints inside and outside should be prepared to be photographed and videotaped.
- I must photograph and videotape the new evidence, as well as log it with the following information and account for it in the crime-scene sketch:
 - The time and date of evidence discovery.
 - The location that I found the evidence.
 - The name of myself, or whichever officer, CSI, or criminal investigator discovered it.
 - As this is a serious crime, I have chosen that specialized crime scene personnel will assist me.
 - A description of the evidence.
 - Any identifying marks to further detail the evidence.
 - The name of an officer who witnessed the find.
 - This will ensure that there is no question that this was indeed an element of the original crime scene; this will save the investigator setbacks in court.
- All the information that is carefully recorded regarding the crime scene evidence aids the crime report.
 - The location of this evidence is very important, for it may give us the following information:
 - Establish the tracing of, or identification of the suspect.
 - Establishing the suspect's modus operandi (MO) or identifying similar MOs via information added to the FBI's Violent Criminal Apprehension Program (ViCAP) from the completed crime report.
 - Confirming alibis or exposing lies (disproving the alibi).
 - Connecting suspects to the crime or eliminating suspects.
 - The identification of contraband, stolen property, and other illegal items.
 - Identifying victims if they are not identified.
 - For example, we can't assume the woman lives at this residence before confirming it; a dead body may not be initially tied to the residence.
 - Providing investigative leads.
 - For example, checking into the husband or boyfriend and the location of the children based on the crime-scene evidence is warranted.
 - Providing a statutory element of the offense.

The collection of items of evidence

- Like the crime-scene photography, larger items of physical evidence are taken first; this includes the disheveled furniture and children's furniture, cellphone and computer (if there), the knife, and coat hanger.
- The body will be taken later by a CSI with a Coroner for custody to wait for analysis by a forensic medical examiner trained to perform the autopsy.
- The knife should be examined for latent fingerprints to be logged separately; same with the coat hanger, doorknobs around the house, upended furniture, cell phone, and virtually any physical evidence big enough to grab.
 - Crimes of passion are rooted in emotionality and impulsivity: if this is the case, we can likely count on there being latent fingerprints on the doorknob and all over the knife and victim.
- Smaller items of biological or trace evidence such as hair and fibers from clothing must be collected using metal forceps or tweezers as to avoid damaging this delicate evidence which may hold significant value in the criminal investigation.
- Fingerprints and footprints are class evidence to be taken with molds or a fingerprinting kit; fingerprints should be entered into AFIS.
- I should use a swab where applicable to collect fluids or skin cells which contain DNA.
- The shirt likely contains not only the blood of the woman, but the blood of the possible offender.
 - DNA from biological evidence should be swabbed, placed in a vial, documented in notes and on the container for the evidence chain of custody, and included to be sent to the crime lab.
 - The shirt will later be bagged and taken separately as physical evidence.
- I should make sure to swab under her fingernails to see if the DNA of the offender is there: she likely dug into their skin.
- Is there evidence of sexual assault or semen present?
 - This evidence should be marked, swabbed, and collected in a glass vial or cellophane bag.
 - Is there evidence of personation? Did the offender take something or did the offender display an excessive need for control over the victim as demonstrated by a possible sexual assault and murder? These are all observations to be recorded, though not conclusively.
- During the searching phase, the evidence should be marked with the following information in the field notes and later in the evidence seal/packaging (I am choosing to bag all evidence and not directly mark it, for it will be sent to the forensics lab):
 - The size of the object.
 - The physical nature of the object (is it a solid or liquid).
 - If the evidence is a liquid, it should always be kept in an airtight container such as a cellophane bag or glass vial and marked.
 - The value of the object and the number of like objects.
 - The case number pertaining to the evidence.

- The date and exact time retrieved.
- The initials of the person who marked the evidence, BK in this case.
- This process should be done so as many times as needed: it may occur up to a thousand or more times.
 - It must be counted accurately, and the quantity should be accurately recorded on the container.

Packaging the evidence for the forensic lab

- Each item I collect, including but not limited to the knife, coat hanger, and bloody clothing on the woman, must be packaged in the proper way for forensic lab analysis:
 - I must use separate containers for evidence, not mixing things up and causing confusion, no matter how daunting this may be.
 - I must use new, clean packaging that was not previously used as to avoid contamination.
 - Obviously, blood or other biological evidence renders a container spent.
 - Avoiding metal containers which can be reused is ideal to confirm the container is indeed disposed of afterward.
 - The package must be sealed with a strong medium, such as a strong tape.
 - Items of clothing need to be kept as is and not folded.
 - I must keep evidence that was found in a container as it is and mark it.
 - I must include a letter of transmittal to state what type of analysis must be done: for example, wound analysis, DNA or fingerprinting, even ballistics.
 - Again, I must account for and log all this evidence in the chain of custody form: where it was found, how, when, who is transporting it, and where is the evidence locker located.
 - The woman must be removed by a certified professional and sealed, taken into custody by the coroner and sent to the forensic medical examiner for forensic autopsy: this must all be logged in the field notes and initial crime report before compiled in the closing report.
 - The crime-scene will be surveyed if necessary, but the longer the time it takes to do so, the more the chance the crime scene is contaminated.
- When mailed, I must always send this evidence in registered mail enclosed with a secure receipt.
- This careful collection of evidence is all necessary for the crime lab criminalists to be capable of analyzing all elements of the crime, being that they rarely come on the scene.

Evidence chain of custody and inventory receipts

- The careful description of evidence, when and where the evidence was found, and who found it, are all related to the evidence chain of custody.
- All evidence must be described and then transported and placed in an evidence locker- the identity of the transporter and the location of the evidence locker must be accounted for.

- If the evidence is taken out of the locker at the police department, it must be recorded who did so and why they did so.
- The knife, misshapen wire coat hanger, and any physical, biological, or trace evidence found must be accounted for, bagged and sealed, and then kept in an evidence locker.
- Her bloody clothing should be examined as well, but this would infer that she must be moved and have items of clothing removed; this is something the forensic crime scene processing unit should do.
- If she had a cellphone or computer nearby, this should be described, logged, and transported to the digital forensic lab for digital forensic examination.
 - Did she communicate with anyone?
 - Did this communication indicate a conflict?
 - Did her husband or boyfriend contact her?
 - Did anyone else contact her?
 - This may help investigators look in the right direction if things turn out to be not so obvious; again, we can't assume it was the husband or boyfriend just because there may have been a history of domestic violence or a PFA, despite this being very common. Also, she may have children's furniture for her nieces or nephews, so we can't even assume that she had kids.
- When moved, all items will have inventory receipts which document the movement for the chain of custody form.
- All of this is for the accountability and integrity of the evidence, and thus the proper outcome of the criminal investigation.
 - Failing to do so leads to injustice- there can be a very clear link between victim and offender, but if this is not accounted for via chain of custody, then it will be inadmissible.

Outreach to other agencies and immediate elements of the investigation

- A lot of these inquiries would occur concurrently with the crime-scene investigation.
- Does she have kids? The county records office should give us this information.
- If so, the welfare of the children should be ensured: we are aware that there are disheveled items of children's furniture around, but where are the kids?
 - Calls to be made to all family members of the deceased would help narrow down locations.
- Calls to the clerk of courts office to see if there is a PFA out on the husband or boyfriend should be made.
- The husband or boyfriend of the deceased woman should be contacted to establish an alibi- he needs to be immediately located and questioned.
- The kids should be located as soon as possible, and an amber alert should be set if they are not accounted for: does their father even have rights to see the kids under normal circumstances and did he take them?
- Neighbors should be questioned to see if the father was around, or if any suspicious person was present.

- Anyone who normally passes by the scene, such as a mailman, should be questioned and an alibi established.
 - Where were the neighbors when this happened? Their alibis should be evident and supported.
 - Did they notice anything unusual?
 - Maybe the father was seen with the kids leaving the scene: this can be important evidence if the father is not responding and the kids are not located.
 - The amber alert can be set based on the vehicle, plate numbers, and description of the Father if applicable.
- Eyewitnesses and surveillance footage in the trailer park, surrounding area, drugstore which oversees the trailer, or nearby gas station, can give us information on this crime.
 - Surveillance footage is circumstantial evidence but may lead investigators in the right direction and to the apprehension of the suspect.
- If we can't gather conclusive information by the end of the investigation, the FBI's Violent Criminal Apprehension Program (ViCAP) can help.
- ViCAP may be utilized if this case happens to be unrelated to a domestic dispute: this may be the work of a serial killer, though this is highly unlikely.
 - Still, we are only looking at the facts of the investigation rather than conjecture, and we can only say for sure once the suspect is apprehended and the evidence is strong enough to say what happened with scientific certainty.

The compilation of evidence in the preliminary report, progress report, closing report, and prosecution report

- My notes enabled that I wrote a thorough and accurate preliminary case report which contained all the facts of the case.
 - I will need to update it with a progress report as we track down suspects, and eventually create the closing and prosecution reports which will be used in court if we get evidence of a specific person who committed this specific crime.
- The closing report will be the culmination of all the facts after investigation and lab analysis which lead to the most accurate reconstruction of the scene possible.
- The steps that I have listed will ensure that the prosecution report and closing report reflect a proper investigative procedure with full admissibility of evidence into court.
 - All the notifications were made, and the evidence chain of custody and investigative procedure ensured the integrity and accuracy of the evidence of the crime scene.
 - With thorough documentation, it is unlikely that the defense will be able to discredit the investigation and render evidence inadmissible.
 - This clear information will allow the jury to deliberate based on all the evidence.
- Finally, adding this information to the FBI's National Incident-Based Report System (NIBRS) will allow the FBI's Uniform Crime Report (UCR) to give summative information of all applicable crimes to help police officers, criminologists, and criminal investigators understand the social trends of crime, thus aiding future cases.